

One potential problem when learning a new language can be pronunciation. For example, for a native Russian speaker, it can be challenging to pronounce words in English, Spanish, or Japanese.

In the case of English, the notorious “TH” sound (i.e., /ð/ as in “this” or /θ/ as in “thing”) makes it very difficult to sound fluent. A simple “the” article comes out as “зэ” (/ʰzɛ/) or “зе” (/ʰzʲɛ/), simply because Russian does not have an equivalent to the “TH” sound.

As for Spanish, the “G” sound in Russian, as in “аллигатор” (/ɐlʲɪˈgatɐr/), is *harder*. For example, the word “juego” (/ˈfwexo/) has a distinctively *softer* “G.” The closest pronunciation would be “фүэго” (/fuˈɛgo/) or “фүэхо” (/fuˈɛxo/).

And lastly, although some Japanese moras<sup>1</sup> have perfect matches in Russian, there are still some hurdles to becoming fluent. For example, 落語 (<sup>らくご</sup>/rakɯ̟˞gɔ/) has ろ in the beginning, which is represented as “ra” in rōmaji<sup>2</sup>, but it is pronounced neither like “pa” (“ra”) nor like “ла” (“la”), even though native speakers would identify them as the same sound.

This is why understanding how sounds are created in the mouth is important. And, of course, practice makes perfect.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mora\\_\(linguistics\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mora_(linguistics))

<sup>2</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization\\_of\\_Japanese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Romanization_of_Japanese)